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SUBJECT: IRELAND WELCOMES PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF  
REVIEW OF U.S. POLICY IN IRAQ

REF: STATE 18283

11. (U) On February 27, The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Micheal Martin, issued a press release welcoming the announcement of the review of U.S. Policy in Iraq. The release was titled, "Minister for Foreign Affairs welcomes President Obama's announcement of the Review of US Policy in Iraq."

Begin Text of Press Release  
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The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Micheal Martin, T.D., welcomed the announcement today by President Obama of his Administration's review of US Policy in Iraq, including the substantial reduction in troop numbers by 31 August 2010.

The Minister said: "This early elaboration of U.S. policy, coming on foot of the commitments made in the U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement, provides a welcome indication of the new Administration's commitment to move forward with a responsible withdrawal of troops in Iraq. This is coupled with the reassurance that the necessary supports, security and otherwise, will continue to be provided to the people of Iraq over the transitional period ahead, including the forthcoming elections."

The Minister also welcomed the U.S. Administration's continuing work with the Iraqi Government, as it addresses the challenges of rebuilding the political and administrative structures within Iraq and its relations within the region, with a view to securing long term peace and stability.

"We have long looked forward to the day when the Iraqi authorities would be able to provide for the security of their people without outside assistance. President Obama's welcome announcement today shows that we are coming much closer to that point," the Minister said.

End Text of Press Release  
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12. (SBU) Comment: Martin's statements accurately reflect the sentiments of both the Irish government and the Irish people. We expect that Irish Prime Minister Brian Cowen will note his government's support of President Obama's new initiatives when Cowen meets the President at the White House on March 17 (St. Patrick's Day).

FAUCHER